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# LARRY CRAIG

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NEWS RELEASE

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## **CRAIG BLAMES CONGRESS FOR AIRLINES' DECLINE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Senator Larry Craig today blamed the decline of the U.S. airline industry on the country's dependence on foreign oil and on Congress' failure for 20 years to enact a national energy policy that includes new technologies, conservation and increased development and production of existing domestic energy sources.

Speaking during the Senate's consideration of the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, a bill aimed at modernizing the nation's air traffic control system, Craig lamented the damage to the airlines, "once a great American industry . . . that set the world's standard."

"One of the underlying reasons (for airline failures) is the substantial cost in aviation fuel that all of these large carriers must acquire on a daily basis and their inability to simply pass it through to the consumer," Craig said. "That's exactly what's going on in nearly every industry in America today. We are experiencing an energy shock to our pocketbook."

"It is so easy to blame somebody else for a problem that largely this Congress has observed, talked about and denied action on for nearly 20 years," Craig said. "Now we are here today wringing our hands in frustration about the phenomenal cost to the American consumer, and we reach out to blame someone when we can't find it easy to blame ourselves."

Craig said it was wrong to blame domestic oil companies like Exxon and Chevron when it is foreign governments like Saudi Arabia – not U.S. oil companies – which control the world's oil supply. He said Congress has denied the United States the ability to develop our oil reserves in Alaska and offshore most of our coasts, all in the name of the environment, even though the technology is environmentally sound.

"More than sixty percent of the energy consumed out of the pump at the local gas station on the corner of America today comes from somewhere else in the world," Craig said. "We're spending over \$1 billion a day of our money somewhere else in the world to buy their oil. . . If we don't get this under control as quickly as possible, we will spend ourselves broke, and the rest of the world will have all our money."

Craig, a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said he will be presenting a series of floor speeches over the next several months talking about every segment of the energy portfolio of our country – not just gas and oil – but also electricity, including nuclear, wind, hydroelectric and other sources of clean energy. "The bad news for consumers is that nothing we do today is going to be ready for four to ten years, and in the meantime, your energy bill is going to become

an ever larger part of your overall cost of living and your family budget,” Craig said, blaming Congress’ inaction for damaging the marketplace.